

Date: Friday, 20/03/26

Time: 1.30pm

To: Committee Members

At: Held virtually using MS Teams

Subject: AWERB Operations Committee

Attendees: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Apologies: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Minutes: [REDACTED]

Mentioned within text: [REDACTED]

1. Matters arising from the previous minutes

[REDACTED] has contacted the fire safety department and is awaiting a response regarding the fire alarm not contacting the fire brigade. [REDACTED] will check with security whether they contact the fire brigade if the alarm has been sounding and if so, after how long.

[REDACTED] has sent an email to the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs) regarding the entry and exit 20 years competency review. It is going to be taken to the working group on Monday. There was a conversation around why it is set at 20 years. If there is a lapse in competency in the 20 years, then people would be removed from being competent on the system and would need to be re-Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) assessed to be able to do that task again without supervision. It is hoped that this can be discussed and an agreement can be made in Monday's meeting. The length of time on university cards was discussed and whether it could be fixed at a set time. It was agreed that [REDACTED] would investigate this.

NACWOs at the [REDACTED] are still feeding back their opinions regarding malocclusion terminology. Once all responses have been received, [REDACTED] will then ask everyone in UBS their opinion, with a view to coming up with a common terminology and consensus for keep or kill. A meeting with [REDACTED] took place last week about our expectations for receipt of animals.

Action: [REDACTED] to investigate the length of time on university cards

2. Establishment Licence Holder Report/Update

There was an audit on 26th of February with seven inspectors that visited five facilities. The report has not been sent to us yet. Some of the finds were that the rooms on the Project Establishment Licence (PEL) were not being used as intended. If rooms are designated, they should be used for what they are designated for and have the checks done each day. Please review rooms and let the Licence Managers know if any rooms need to be removed or have their designation changed.

It was mentioned that there were unlabelled liquids left around and dirty or messy areas, particularly surgery areas. Please let us the Licencing Team know if you are struggling with staff or researchers not keeping areas tidy.

Peeling paint and floors needing work were also mentioned. If these aren't getting fixed, please let the Licencing Team know.

It was noted that there were some animals being handled by their tail. It should now be standard that we do non-tail handling. Please let the Licencing Team know if you need any help with that.

There should not be any wood, cardboard or other materials that cannot be cleaned in the facilities so, please check areas thoroughly for these.

Also, designated areas need to be cleaned easily so things need to be removed from the procedure rooms or surgery areas and corridors if they cannot be moved and cleaned easily.

There was praise from the inspectors for the knowledge and attitude of the staff.

There was a Home Office Liaison, Training and Information Forum (HOLTIF) meeting. They are making improvements to the licence and audit functions. The Home Office Inspector said that licences now need time bound humane endpoints and to say specifically when the animal will be killed. They have changed their previous advice from phenotyping protocols not having to have a mandatory step, to now having to have a mandatory step. They will be examining statistics in more detail, and they will be developing clearer and more effective advice.

They have concluded recruitment for the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) Governance Board, and they anticipate they will onboard them in April and that they will support ASRU with their strategy of enhancing performance and accountability and managing risk. [REDACTED] has been selected to be on the ASRU Governance Board.

For audits they now have a complete team of 22 inspectors. They aim to introduce new audit types this year which are informed by different compliance standards and requirements.

They are aiming for consistent and timely licence authorisations; however, it has been noticed that they have slowed down.

They aim to improve consistency and eliminate poor quality applications and aim for shorter, more compact licences however, they seem to be asking for a lot more information.

They are creating a standard set of protocols for the genetically altered animals and comments have been submitted for those. They will do more standardised wording for continued use and re-use of animals.

A non-Schedule 1 method of killing not mentioned in schedule 1 has been added to the PEL, which allows the killing of mammalian foetuses in the final third of their gestation by leaving them at least 30 minutes in uterus of the dam, which has already been killed by a schedule 1 method, and had a method of confirmation carried out on it. If you want to use that method, you should be trained and assessed as competent to use it. [REDACTED] will send an email out about it.

ACTION: [REDACTED] to send out an email about the killing of mammalian foetuses.

3. Training and Competencies

██████████ explained that any DOPS that are written need to go through the Training Centre for review otherwise they will not go on to MCMS which means they cannot be stored or recorded anywhere.

4. What is happening in your unit?

██████████ explained that ██████████ will be getting 22 Zebra finches in on 16th April. Magpies should be coming at the beginning of May. A non-reg has been signed off for work with wagtails. There are wagtails on site so they will be mist-netted to catch those. The birds will be added onto the MCMS to ensure DOPS can be completed.

████ said that ████████████████████ are still waiting for floor repairs.

5. Overview of RCA's and SC18's

██████████ reported that since the last online AOC meeting in December there have been 25 RCAs reported. 32 outcomes have come back from ASRU in the same reporting window. These consisted of three letters of reprimand for 29 cases in total which included tail traps, malocclusion and missing animals. There was one letter of inspector advice which was for environmental conditions. There were two cases not pursued.

The Standard Condition 18 report was distributed prior to the meeting. There were a low number of Standard Condition 18's reported in January.

6. Biofacility Infrastructure

██████████ said there was nothing to report.

7. Health and Safety (RA's, COSHH)

On 24th and 25th June there will be Ergonomics Champion training at ██████.

There are discussions taking place on the ongoing development of an animal risk assessment form with a view to making the review process easier.

Thank you to everyone for engaging with risk assessments.

The working group for Building Managers and Maintenance Team has met on two separate occasions. The next meeting will be held at ██████ and future meetings will rotate between the facilities.

Ongoing development of the training matrix will be worked on over the next few months.

There was an email from Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) to see if there was any interest in discussions on the link between occupational asthma and animal allergens.

Lone working across sites is ongoing and a lot of people having been working hard on streamlining the processes.

Thank you to ████████████████████ for the contractor's questionnaire that can be adapted for all facilities to make sure things are in place before contractors arrive. If you haven't seen the questionnaire, please contact ████████████████████

Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Training will be next week.

There is a staff wellbeing fair being held in May. Details of the National Health Service (NHS) health check clinics that take place over a number of sites across Cambridge on different dates will be distributed after the meeting.



■■■■ passed on her thanks to everyone that was involved in the safety audit process. The report was quite positive and mentioned that there is a strong network of safety communication and consultation in place, including an effective health and safety committee. There were some findings which are being worked on. On AssessNet during the period between December and March there were 39 reported incidents across 8 different sites. Of those, there were nine sharps' incidents, six mouse bites, four missing mice, five chemical incidents, one skin reaction, five physical injuries, three underlying health conditions, one allergic reaction, a flood and a near miss. ■■■■ will discuss the missing mice with ■■■■. The allergic reaction was a contractor who attended site at ■■■■ to carry out PAT testing, but they were allergic to mice and were already experiencing symptoms in the admin area. There have been further discussions with the company that they came from. ■■■■ suggested we would benefit from having some specific questions for animal allergens before people come in. ■■■■ have this in place and ■■■■ will discuss this further with ■■■■.

■■■■ reported that there has been no hot water at ■■■■ for a couple of weeks now.

Action: ■■■■ to discuss missing mice with ■■■■
■■■■ to discuss specific questions for animal allergens with ■■■■

8. Any other business

■■■■ reported that ■■■■ sends a thank you to everyone for contributions to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) so far. There are 400 SOPs in total with 50 having been approved this year so far.

■■■■ will distribute a questionnaire to the committee for feedback on the AWERB Operations Committee meeting.

There was a reminder that there will be a surgery technician meeting on 10th April. There has been limited responses so please could managers send a reminder to staff to let ■■■■ know who can and can't attend.

This would have been ■■■■ last meeting, so the chair noted their thanks for his time here and passed on best wishes for his retirement.

■■■■ leaving drinks will be on 2nd April.

Action: Managers to remind staff to let ■■■■ know whether they can attend the surgery technician meeting.

Date of next meeting: 24th April, Group 3